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ABSTRACT

The elements of design (line, shape, color, value, and texture) are the artist's lexicon rather than words, and the meaning of these elements is carried in their expressive properties in picture books as well as in paintings. Line can convey repose when horizontal, stability if vertical, and action when diagonal or curving. The element of shape has the same capacity as line to convey solidity or delicacy, movement or repose. Colors--which in their hue, intensity, and value have come to convey emotional qualities--can also by their combination set a mood or tone for the story. Typeface, the placement of type and its relationship to the pictorial design, can also enhance the unity of the design and underlying theme. Observations of 67 children ages 7 to 10 as they responded to picture books revealed that many children looked at the illustrations before they read to help them with written text. The children's verbal responses in particular showed their diligent attempts to understand the picture book--its medium and its message. They became increasingly aware of the artist as a person to be communicated with and became aware of the range of choices available to the artist. In addition, the children seemed to understand that these choices were made to express some fundamental meaning. (HOD)

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The Artist, the Book and the Child

A conference examining the role of the illustrator as storyteller is long overdue. Too often the artist plays second fiddle to the author, listed second in bibliographical notations and dismissed in picture book reviews with a word or too about the illustrations. Yet philosopher Suzanne Langer (1942) has suggested that "imagemaking is...the mode of our untutored thinking and stories are its earliest product" (p. 145). In their roles as storytellers, illustrators may thus represent our most fundamental human responses.

For the child, picture books can reach these deep wellsprings of human conceptualizing and teach the imagination with fresh visions and ideas, providing a fount for cognitive and aesthetic understandings. What makes such understandings possible? How does the mind of the storyteller connect to the mind of the child through the medium of the picture book?

As an educator I am very much interested in how children respond to books. As an art educator I am interested in the motivations and inspiration of the artist. And as a language educator I have come to see the process of the child's response to a picture book as a communicative event. Louise Rosenblatt (1949) has defined literary response as a "live circuit." I see that live circuit as a dialogue which courses between the artist and the child through the medium of the picture book. This paper will examine the roles of the two participants in this dialogue: first, the artist as maker and communicator of meaning, then the child as a receiver and re-maker of meaning.

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Finally, I will examine the context where the two minds connect in "live circuits."

Langer has argued that language and art have the same root--the symbolic construction and expression of meaning. To tell a story both author and illustrator must make choices. The author uses discursive symbols, choosing various cohesive devices to hold and mold together words and sentences into narrative structures which convey a central meaning or theme. The artist, too, must make choices in conveying meaning, and while the language of art is non-linear there is a syntax and semantics to art as well as to literature. The literal or formal properties such as lines or color (the syntactical system) also carry metaphorical and expressive properties (the semantic system).

For the picture book illustrator the field of choices goes beyond the confines of a single page or picture plane to a succession of images held within the boundaries of cover and endpages. Not only must choices be made regarding elements of design and principles of composition on single and succeeding pages, but illustrators can also make technical choices regarding original media, typeface, and arrangement of printed text, paper stock, cover and endpages, spatial orientation or viewpoint, and pictorial content. In addition, historical and cultural conventions of depicting represent additional choices available to the illustrator.

By looking at the illustrator's style or manner of expression as a field of syntactic and semantic choices made in conveying meaning, we can begin to understand how the many diverse factors which constitute a picture book can work together to speak clearly and deeply to the reader.

The elements of design (line, shape, color, value and texture) are the artist's lexicon rather than words, and the meaning of these elements is carried in their expressive properties in picture books as well as in paintings. Line, the most frequently found element in book illustrations, has great expressive potential. It can convey repose when horizontal, stability if vertical, and action when diagonal or curving. David MacCaulay's lines convey time and space with humor and liveliness at the same time the lines clarify difficult architectural or technical concepts, a choice that facilitates understanding at the same time that it keeps the reader's interest. Arnold Lobel's sl nder pen strokes in Frog and Toad are lines at their most primal and descriptive level. Uniform and flowing they represent characters who are loyal, consistent and lighthearted in spite of little setbacks, just as children react to their simple childhood concerns. In her version of Cinderella, on the other hand, Marcia Brown has chosen short, fragmented lines for characters and scenes. These convey the elegant fussiness of the French Court and connect the reader to Charles Perrault's original audience in the sumptuous drawing rooms of seventeenth century France.

Varying combinations of lines have the potential for subtle yet profound expressions of meaning. Mark Brown combines thick and thin lines into a whirling, curving pattern which recreates the movement and rhythm of the ocean in Why the Tides Ebb and Flow while in Charles Keeping's Willie's Fire Engine the interplay of thick vertical lines set behind the thin curves of the human forms recreates the tension and helplessness of children trapped in the bowels of the urban ghetto.

The element of shape has the same capacity as line to convey solidity or delicacy; movement or repose. Peter Parnell's womblike

bio-morphic shapes, for example, represent the security of a child's special hiding place in Your Own Best Secret Place while Janina Domanska's angular, jagged shapes lend excitement and action to The Bremen Town Musicians.

Texture, a third element of design, has similar movement or tension producing qualities as in Keeping's illustration for Joseph's Yard. Texture can also convey a sense of the real or surreal as well as human personality characteristics such as coarseness or gentleness.

Colors, which in their hue, intensity, and value have come to convey emotional qualities, can also by their combination set a mood or tone for the story. A monochromatic scheme lends a feeling of quiet, cool stillness to Shulevitz's Dawn or subtly restates the theme as in Feelings' Jambo Means Hello while the contrasting colors in Carle's The Grouchy Lady Bug make the solid shapes come alive and reinforce the theme of the ladybug's journey.

Value, the amount of light or dark on a surface, can also express mood or evoke feelings. When there is little contrast in value, the mood can be somber and meancing, as in Zelinsky's Hansel and Gretel or Hyman's Rapunzel, or restful and quiet as in Hide and See Fog. A wide range of values can create action or movement as in Ungerer's Moon Man. When techniques of chiarascuro (depicting light on forms) are used by artists such as Lloyd Bloom in We Be Warm Til Springtime Comes, a feeling of excitement and drama reaches out to involve the reader.

The elements of design do not, of course, exist in a vacuum; each often contains elements of another and they can interact together in varying ways to create a design. This organization, often called composition or principles of design, can be responsible for the

underlying purpose of design--the creation of unity or a meaningful whole. To accomplish this unity, the artist can use pattern or repetition to achieve visual harmony and balance, or he can introduce variety in order to set up more involved oppositions and progressions. Through either of these approaches, transitions can be developed which lead the eye from one point to another--forcefully or subtly.

The principles of design are relevant to the composition of a single picture and to the overall design of the book as well. It is especially important to consider the principles of design in preparation of the entire book in order to create a unified whole. This means that cover design, text placement, typography, endpapers, illustrations, and empty space should all be considered as elements of the total design. The arrangement and sequencing of these elements can move the eye effectively through the story or destroy its continuity. In the picture book, for example, contrasting values, colors, shapes, and lines can produce variety. This variety can create tension or imbalance and thereby establish excitement and a feeling of movement. On the other hand, rhythmic qualities of pattern and repetition can convey a feeling of harmony and balance.

Vidal, for example, altered the placement of pictorial shapes and text in Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain and used contrasting values to create a rhythmic pattern that echoed the cumulative refrain of the text like the beating of African drums. This pattern is interspersed by double-page spreads which lend variety to the repetition, yet the after-image is one of unified design.

In Willie's Fire Engine Charles Keeping changes color, intensity, and the size and shape of each view to build the story to a

climax. The story begins with small vignettes in dull, neutral colors which represent the characters hopeless existence, but gradually changes to intense reds and larger picture frames as the climax approaches.

Because the picture book is a combination of print and picture and is the product of technology, the artists' choices are not limited to elements or principles of design but extend to more mundane aspects of book production which nevertheless have certain expressive qualities. The artist can choose to use a form of media which even after it is mechanically reproduced retains aspects of the original and refelcts a mood or theme. The transparent, watery mingling of watercolors in Shulevitz's Rain Rain Rivers, for example, is the essence of rain itself--the right choice for this book about a rainy day. Conte crayon allowed Van Allsburg to create subtle gradations of light and dark in Jumanji which makes his forms three-dimensional and invites the eye into the scene. In addition, the choice of paper stock, a mat rather than shiny finish, gives the reader a spooky feeling, as if the scenes will come to life or the dust will rub off on our hands.

Typeface, the placement of type and its relationship to the pictorial design, can also enhance the unity of the design and underlying theme. A sans-serif, modern type reflects the simple shapes and patterns in The Grouchy Ladybug while calligraphic styles are more in keeping with the settings of Sendak's or Hyman's tales. The decision to print words in white type rather than on white rectangles in Bloom's We Be Warm Til Springtime Comes keeps the design of the story intact. The block of type becomes an integral part of the design without interfering with the mood of the story or interrupting the continuity of the drama.

The choice of cover art, endpapers, and title pages can attract our eye and prepare our mind to understand the story which follows. The cover scene for Zelinsky's version of Hansel and Gretel shows the two children approaching the witch's cottage--a visual preview of the story not repeated in the book itself--while the endpages, containing grand and far-distant vistas of the countryside, further set the stage for the story which follows. Hogrogian carefully chooses endpapers which capture the reader's attention with a single off-balance pear leaf in Sir Ribbeck of Ribbeck of Haviland or evoke a key story element such as the hazel tree branches in Cinderella.

Choices made for cover-art endpages and title pages suggest another technical choice which the artist must consider--the pictorial content. The aspect of the story which the artist chooses to picture can reflect important themes and reinforce them, or can distract attention from the meaning of the story. In Burkert's illustrations for Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, for example, the stepmother's face is never portrayed, while Hyman's depiction of the stepmother's growing descent into madness gives an added dimension to the story.

The choice of subject matter also includes the highlighting of important points of the story. Many artists depict events in small vignettes or in single-page illustrations, then switch to double-page spreads at key moments. Maruki intersperses printed text with small pictures as she relates the everyday events preceding the bombing in Hiroshima No Pika. The full horror of that blast is portrayed in a double-page spread with no written text, and its impact is thus highly emotional. Turkle dramatizes key moments in Deep in the Forest by

removing the characters from the conventional background used throughout and highlighting them against the white page.

The artist's point of view or spatial orientation can also extend and heighten the underlying theme of the story. Donald Carrick pictures the scenes in Ben and the Porcupine from far-off or normal viewing distances. This makes the sudden close-up of the dog's muzzle shot with porcupine quills all the more dramatic. The introductory view of Burkert's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs shows us the characters through a window in a massive castle wall--a device which recalls psychoanalyst Bruno Bettleheim's contention that children want to keep the true nature of these tales at a distance. Van Allsburg alternates perspective in Jumanji with two-point, bird's-eye view, and worm's-eye view. These changes heighten the air of mystery and intimacy--the viewer has the feeling of hiding in the room and watching the drama unfold.

A final category of artistic choices available to illustrators is represented in historical or cultural patterns of depicting--those widely accepted styles which have come to be identified with an era or culture. When these conventions are chosen by illustrators to reinforce themes or settings, they can be particularly effective in expressing meaning.

Early Christian artists, for example, were concerned with conveying a religious text to an illiterate populace. In order that this message was clear and uniform, dramatic movement and three-dimensional form were subdued for repetition of motifs and conventional, undifferentiated symbols. The art of book illumination echoed these characteristics and the repetition of motifs and patterns and the use of stock symbols were found in books as well as in paintings. These

conventions have become associated with many Eastern European and Russian cultures into the present day. In books like Din Dan Don It's Christmas by Janina Domanska, artists have chosen such conventions to connect today's reader to these ancient roots and in doing so they establish emotional undertones far beyond the simple text of their stories.

Such connections can be found to other periods of history as well. In Northern Renaissance art, a style epitomized by Pieter Breughel, artists were concerned with a view of the world which was more in line with what could actually be. The preoccupation with forms, proportioning of space, and emphasis on dramatic lighting as apparent in magnificent landscapes and detailed portraits. Paul Zelinsky and Erroll LeCain have used such devices to illustrate two tales which date from such a time and place--Grimm's Hansel and Gretel and Anderson's The Snow Queen.

In the Baroque period emphasis moved away from Renaissance preoccupation with classicism to a more grandiose, richly ornamented style. Dramatic qualities were emphasized by the use of chiarascuro or great contrast in lighting while the genre painting of Dutch masters increased the viewer's feeling of intimacy with the scene. Arnold Lobel has chosen to adopt such conventions to illustrate The Microscope, Maxine Kumin's poem to Dutch inventor Anton C. Leeuwenhoek. The qualities of several Dutch masters are captured in Lobel's unique style and the end result is a combination of words and text which convey information about the man and his invention and about the artistic, scientific and social climate of the day.

These references to earlier periods of art can be found in many picture books as can certain conventions which have come to be

identified with particular cultural groups--simplified abstract carvings with African peoples, the small concern with realistic appearance found in Early American folk art, or the exploration of linear effects and arrangements found in Oriental forms. Illustrators have used these cultural conventions to lend authenticity and strengthen meaning in tales set in these various cultures: the Dillons in Song of the River Boat, Barbara Cooney in The OxCart Man, and Nancy Burkert in The Nightingale.

When artists such as these make the right choice, the resulting work of art can create what Marantz (1977) calls "a transcendental experience--a state of mind where new and personal meanings take shape" (p. 177). But are such experiences possible for children? Is there a live connection made between what the artist conveys and what the child understands, or are the subtle messages of our best picture book illustrators received only by other knowing adults?

Some critics of children's literature would argue that books such as Outside Over There, Jumanji or The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher have attracted adult audiences but are too sophisticated for children. And research findings for the past 60 years might seem to support such an argument. These researchers conducted numerous preferences studies which, depending on variables isolated, found that children liked color rather than black and white, naturalism rather than abstraction in pictures and familiar subject matter to the unfamiliar. Smerdon (1976), for example, prepared six drawings which ranged in style from realistic to abstract--pairs were flashed on a screen at five second intervals and children were asked to check the one they liked best in a booklet. He concluded that children preferred

realism to abstraction and recommended that book publishers and purchasers consider children's preferences. Yet such instruments have little resemblance to the art object that is the picture book. Nor do they consider the very personal nature of response and the time it may take to develop.

To find out how children in natural settings might respond to real picture books and to study their responses over time, I spent forty weeks in three classrooms over a two-year period observing, recording and interviewing 67 children ages 7-10 as they responded to picture books. In addition to recording discussions between children and their teachers, I asked children to look at and talk about illustrated versions of Grimm fairy tales--first and second-graders compared The Bremen Town Musicians and third and fourth-graders looked at Hansel and Gretel. I did not teach, however, I listened--and teachers and children were the source of the data. Even in interviews I asked open-ended questions--Tell me What you are Thinking.--so the responses are those that occurred naturally in these special classrooms.

The classrooms were alternative classrooms in an upper middle-class suburb of Columbus, Ohio. Teachers used children's literature as the focus for reading instruction and provided children with many opportunities to respond to books in a variety of ways. The curriculum was organized around themes such as 'Japan,' 'water,' 'time' or 'folktales' and children were read to, given time to read and talk about books as well as to react through art, drama and writing. No basal textbooks were present in the classrooms. Instead, each class had a library of between 300 and 500 picture books placed on shelves and displayed in every available space around the room. As I examined

field notes and transcripts over a period of days and weeks, three themes or domains of response emerged which were eventually organized into a descriptive framework for children's response to picture books. These themes included the classroom context for responses, a second theme--the importance of time in deepening and extending children's responses, and the third and largest theme--the variation in children's responses.

I found that children varied in the way they chose books--often picking books a teacher or librarian had read or a peer had recommended or those that were displayed cover forward.

Children varied in the way they looked at books--many children looked at the illustrations before they read to help them make predictions about the story or they looked from picture to text as they read to help them with written text. Others paid less attention to pictures as they read. Two boys reading Jumanji, for example, covered the picture with an elbow at first, but as the climax of the story neared they spent more time looking at the illustrations.

Children varied in the behaviors they exhibited in response to books. Younger children, especially, reacted physically--moving in time with the rhythm, recreating actions or sound effects. Following the reading children also responded through drama, art displays and writing. A fourth-grader responded to McDermott's The Stonecutter:

> I made a collage from the stone cutter by Gerald McDermott. First I started out with the background by using blue green and blue purple chalk. Then I used green shiny fancy paper for the mountain. The spirit of the mountain is done in waxy green paper. Next I made the stonecutter's hut out of felt-like royal blue paper. Also I cut a crescent shape moon from waxy light blue paper. Last I finished off with the stonecutter. He is made of shiny aqua turquoise paper.

I found that children varied in what they talked about as they looked at picture books. They used a special register when talking about books--the lexicon of the expert--using terms like technique, style, media, title page and endpaper. When they ran out of terms from the critic's vocabulary, they made up their own terms. A first-grader described Sendak's pictures in Outside Over There as "lushy" while a third-grader thought Hyman's Little Red Riding Hood was "sprite." Another third-grader chose to read Jonas' Round Trip because the pictures were "obstacle illusions," and a first-grader stated that wood-block prints were made by "color concussion." He knew this because he'd "looked carefully at the book with a magnifying glass."

The children's verbal responses in particular showed their diligent attempts to understand the picture book--its medium and its message. Indeed, linguist Michael Halliday's (1975) contention that children use language in "learning how to mean" was certainly apparent in these classrooms as children talked about their picture books.

The children often used language for informative purposes as they looked at picture books. One seven-year-old named the objects pictured in Plume's Bremen Town Musicians. "This is the donkey, this is the hound and this is the cat," he told me. His classmate described and narrated pictured events in Domanska's What Do You See? "The water's sorta dark and the background is sorta dark and they have him diving in and then they're on the boat." Other children used informative language to compare illustrations in one book or in several books. First-graders pointed out that the cover picture in We Be Warm Til Springtime Comes was also found inside the book while a second-grader stated that the game box under the tree in Jumanji bore the

topiary figures found in an earlier Van Allsburg book, The Garden of Abdul Gazazi. Other children discovered the dog in that earlier book reappears as a toy in Jumanji.

A second-grader who asked "How could she fly," as he looked at Sendak's heroine in Outside Over There was using heuristic language--language for discovering, making inferences or predicting. His classmates used heuristic language to explain that she could fly because her cloak was magic or to infer that Outside Over There is really a dream because a shepherd and his sheep are depicted on several pages and "You count sheep when you dream." Fourth-graders who had spent many months with the book decided that a storm depicted there represents the heroine's true feelings--"she has to take care of the baby and that's her responsibility, and she feels bad, and that's why the storm is there."

Heuristic language also helped children to understand the process of illustration as well as the product, and many inferences were made about the artist's original media. A first-grader explained that Bloom had used paint in We Be Warm Til Springime Comes because she could "see the brush coming down" while another child thought it looked "like he used his fingers or his hands."

A third purpose for language used in talking about picture books was "imaginative"--language that allowed children to enter the world of the picture book. "I'm thinking I'm the dog. No, I want to be the cat," said a first-grader looking at Domanska's Bremen Town Musicians while a third-grader actually assumed the role of the woodcutter as she looked at the woodcutter facing the wolf in Little Red Riding Hood. "So here you are, you old sinner, I've been looking for

you all these years and now this is where I find you," she exclaimed in her best gruff-woodcutter's voice.

The imaginative function was often used to create new forms or to make the unfamiliar familiar through the use of metaphors or similes. First- and second-graders referred to Tomie DePaola's distinctive clouds as "pumpy" or "like mashed potatoes." A first-grade boy suggested that the ripples of foam spreading out behind the rowboat in Shulevitz's Dawn was like "whipped cream that men put on to shave" while a third-grader thought the image of the moon in Jonas' Round Trip resembled .. goblin.

At other times imaginative language represented an inner mental reorganization or creation of new images. Adam, a first-grader told me that when I'd read The Bremen Town Musicians to him (without showing illustrations) he'd thought of pictures that resembled Donna Diamond's black and white impressionistic drawings of the story. "But then," he stated, "I asked my mind to change it into color." Two first-grade girls compared Diamond's black and white drawings to Jumanji:

> "Jumanji's got a little bit more colors," Nina stated.
> "Colors?" I asked.
> "See, the game board," she replied
> "It looks like all different colors, doesn't it?" her friend agreed.
> "And like when you just turn it and you can see white and you can see a little bit red," added Nina.

Many of the comments children made about picture books served a personal function. The objects or events in picture books would remind children of something in their personal lives. The patterns in Domanska's What Do You See? reminded a first-grader of her bathroom wallpaper, while events in We Be Warm Til Springtime Comes recalled personal milestones to a second-grader:

> "Cause you know, they were wishing spring would come, but it was winter. Just like I'm hoping spring will come - that's when my First Communion is."

At other times pictures often aroused expressions of personal feelings among children. First and second-graders exclaimed, "Don't show that picture, it's so sad!" as they looked at a closeup of a dog with porcupine quills in his muzzle in Ben and the Porcupine.

The personal function also called for expressions of opinions about books. To first and second-graders a book was a "good book because I liked it." Older children, however, began to be less subjective in expressing opinions and began to consider objective criteria for judging the qualities of a book. A third-grader comparing Blair Lent's The Wave with Sara Cone Bryant's The Burning Rice Fields wrote:

> I really notice the difference in the language and the illustrations of the two books. In The Wave the language is very exquisite and very delicate - the words carefully picked one by one and in The Burning Rice Fields the words are sloped on the page. The illustrations in The Wave is cardboard cuts carefully cutted to resemble objects in the story and in The Burning Rice Fields the pictures are done in a child's version of crayon drawings. Unfortunately I like The Burning Rice Fields better because it's in more detail.

As children used language for many purposes in talking about picture books, their comments showed them to be developing more critical thinking not only in cognitive factors but of aesthetic factors as well. First, they seemed to become increasingly aware that the artist is a real person. Seven and eight-year olds were somewhat unsure about who created illustrations. When asked how he knew that three different versions of The Bremen Town Musicians had been created by three different artists, a first-grader pointed to the copyright pages. "This one is from New York, this one is from the United States

of America and this one is made in New York, New York." Third and fourth-graders, however, knew that a real person lay behind the pages of the book, someone they could "talk" to as well as "listen" to. A third-grader, looking at Wreck of the Zephyr, remarked, "Those are nice pictures. We ought to write to Van Allsburg."

This growing awareness of the artist as a person to be communicated with was accompanied by an awareness of the range of choices available to the artist and the growing understanding that these choices were made to express some fundamental meaning.

Children of all ages were familiar with the elements of design. The first and second-graders talked about squiggly lines, twisty lines, or skinny lines, construction paper shapes, smooth or rough textures, and light or dull colors. Many of the younger children mentioned the fact that black and white were not colors, yet they referred to illustrations in black and white as colorful. One first-grader explained that Diamond's version of The Bremen Town Musicians was in black and white. "That's how they used to do it," he explained, "they didn't have color. No one invented color yet...and they never heard of color in their life...."

The older children, however, were able to distinguish science from art and seemed to understand the expressive qualities of the elements of design. They talked about lines that looked scary, shapes and colors that made the picture sad, or colors which were chosen to show evil. The children also talked about the artist's use of light and textures. Van Allsburg "really uses the sunlight," said a fourth-grader while a classmate noticed the change from "happy" colors to "dismal" colors in Hiroshima No Pika: "It makes you terrified to see all these people dead and dying." The children also seemed to

recognize that these visual elements might be chosen to express the meaning of the story. A fourth-grader criticized Matsutani's The Crane Maiden as "too blocklike, all straight and made up of squares." The Crane Wife, on the other hand, was "made up of little circles. It fits the story better," she explained, "because it's a smooth story and a ball rolls and a square won't."

The children's awareness of stylistic elements extended to technical choices as well as to design choices. They talked about original media, cover art, and endpages. The first-grader who thought Mother Mother I Want Another and I Saw A Ship A Sailing were by the same illustrator "because of the letters" was certainly noticing the distinctive typeface. And a third-grader responded to the placement of type and pictures in Browne's Hansel and Gretel: "I like the way he put a few words just at the side of the page," she explained,"and he only used one side for the big picture." Another third-grader speculated as to why Maruki switched to a double-page spread with no printed text in Hiroshima No Pika. "It gives me the impression that the illustrator's just seen the bomb happen...and she just choked and doesn't want to talk about it and she'll show you a picture of what happened."

The children's comments about what they saw in the pictures show a more careful attention to the artist's choice of pictorial content than many adults might give the illustrations. Children noticed tiny mice in Peter Spier's Gobble Growl Grunt, the gnomes in many of Tomie DePaola's books, or mushrooms growing under the strawberry snatcher's feet in The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher. A first-grader pointed out that the tiny book on the hassock in Shulevitz's Oh What a Noise bears the title of the book on its spine, no more than half an inch across. This attention to pictorial content

seemed to help children think more carefully about difficult picture books. A second-grader solved the mystery of The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher, a surrealistic, wordless picture book that had many adults baffled. "See, that's his magic hat," she explained of the strawberry snatcher, "he can change into the fruit seller and the lady in the telephone booth."

The children's careful consideration of choices available to the artist and their growing awareness of the emotive power of such elements helped build stylistic awareness unusual in most seven- to ten-year-olds. This awareness did not extend to abstract categories such as realism or expressionism. A first-grader, for example, insisted that Vidal's pictures in the stylistic Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain looked real while third-graders applied the term "realistic" to Galdone's sketchy pencil and wash illustrations in Hansel and Gretel "because they had a lot of lines." Instead, the children went beyond the stylistic pigeon holes of the adult world to speak more directly to the heart of an artist's style.

Artist Maurice Sendak, for example, pays homage to nineteenth century German painters in Outside Over There, and his lush landscapes are evocative of the Northern Renaissance paintings of Peter Breughel. Looking at the book, First and second-graders remarked that the pictures looked "antique" or "from the Bible" and that the babies looked like "Jesus babies" (babies in paintings of the nativity the child had seen at Christmas time). Chris Van Allsburg is primarily a sculptor, and his illustrations reflect the three-dimensional quality of the medium of clay or stone. A first-grader stated that the pictures in Jumanji looked like clay, while a third-grader remarked

that the wave in Wreck of the Zephyr "looks like it's a stone wall because it's three-dimensional."

In fact, the first-grader's insistence that the pictures in Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain looked "real" was perhaps more valid than any stylistic labels we adults might have applied, for the match between the rhythmic patterned text from the African Plain and the rhythmic patterns of the art in the book is a true one and may have made this book come alive for him--made it "real."

Such live connections between artist and child were evident in the careful consideration first and second-graders gave the question of Van Allsburg's choice of black and white rather than color for Jumanji. "Just because they're not colored doesn't mean they're not good," and "Pictures don't have to be in color," they declared. A second-grade boy explained,

> "It's harder when it's in black and white. It takes more time and you just can't whip through the book. The monkeys in the closet would have been easier to see if they were in color. You like to take time."

How can adults see to it that other children will "like to take time" with other picture books and so ensure that live connections continue to be made? While the nature of ethnographic studies make generalization to other contexts difficult, the findings reported here regarding children's responses, the context in which they occur, and the importance of time in developing response, taken with conclusions reached in other studies (Hickman, 1979; Hepler, 1982) suggest that adults play an important role in the process of broadening and deepening response.

The classrooms in which these responses were made were classrooms which valued good literature. Literature, not textbooks, was

the core of the curriculum and a wide range of picture books were available--attractively displayed, accessible and inviting.

While peer reactions and recommendations about books were an important part of the classroom context, the teachers played a key role in engendering response. They read to children often and the books they read achieved a special status. Teachers talked with children during the reading, helping to make connections among books by making frequent comparisons--from one book to another or from the book to experiences in the real world.

Teachers helped children understand the author/illustrator's role in the creation of the book by referring to them by name and by drawing attention to information on the end flaps. They frequently highlighted the works of a single author or illustrator.

Teachers also helped expand the children's knowledge of aesthetic factors by looking carefully at all aspects of the book--even the copyright page drew careful attention. They used stylistic terms as they talked with children in order to give children the words they needed to talk about books. Most important, however, teachers used statements like "Tell me what you are thinking" or "How did those pictures make you feel?" to invite children to develop insights which grow out of <u>personal</u> experiences and understandings.

When I asked one teacher to read <u>Outside Over There</u> to her class, for example, she introduced the book this way:

> Mrs. Hall: I have a special new storybook to share with you. Please come up close, very, very close. It's one of <u>those</u> books. What did you say about this book, Hildy?
>
> Hildy: Is that from the Bible - -?
>
> Mrs. Hall: /<u>pauses</u>/ The author - -

1st child: Marice Sendak.

2nd child: I know! Ohh - she also umm - wrote Where the Wild Things Are.

Mrs. Hall: Maurice Sendak. Look what I just did. I flipped to the back pages. Why?

Child: They tell something.

Mrs. Hall: I thought there might be a picture of Maurice Sendak and wanted to see - Maurice Sendak is a man and I thought we might have some information on the back pages...

After the children had made further comments about the book, Mrs. Hall asked, "What would you expect to find in this story just from looking?" The children supplied a variety of answers: "Flowers..." "Little people..." "Jahwahs..." "A whole bunch of babies." Then, as she read, the children continued to comment. Mrs. Hall would often pause at the end of the page, inviting their reactions with a question or with her silence.

Mrs. Hall: /reading/ "'They stole my sister away!' she cried, 'to be a nasty goblin's bride!' Now Ida in a hurry snatched her Mama's yellow rain cloak, tucked her horn safe in a pocket and made a serious mistake."
What do you think the mistake would be? She made a serious mistake /she paused, then turned the page and read/ "She climbed backwards out her window into outside over there."

Child: Look at that shadow. Like they're going to take her...

wnd child: Umm - is that a crack there? Is that a crack? It looks like there's a special light there. It's the light there. Maybe that down there it gets to the ship - the light in the picture.

3rd child: And it has a moon coming up and everything .

4th child: It could be a path

Children: Yeah!

Mrs. Hall: A path to where?

4th child: I don't know - - the goblins - -

2nd child: Oh! Outside over there.

3rd child: Yeah - into outside over there.

Mrs. Hall: I like that, don't you?

Child: I was gonna say that.

As each new page was read and studied, the children excitedly verbalized their reactions. At the end, however, Mrs. Hall helped to return the focus of their thinking to the total book.

Mrs. Hall: What does this book make you think about? What does it make you think about, Melissa?

Child: /Interrupting/ Daytime - because it starts - -

Mrs. Hall: What, Melissa?

Melissa: Well, water - cause there was a whole bunch of water and there was always water.

Mrs. Hall: Jenny?

Jenny: It made me feel sad.

Mrs. Hall: Why would you say that?

Jenny: Because they took the baby away. They did a couple of things that were sad but the ending made me feel better.

Mrs. Hall: Hildy?

Hildy: Well, because the pictures and stuff.

Mrs. Hall: What did the pictures make you think of?

Hildy: Well, they're sort of lushy and stuff - -

Mrs. Hall: Lushy. Hmmm. That's lovely. Tommy?

Tommy: Okay - ummm - there's time in it because it starts from the day it goes all through the night and back to day again.

Child: And the moon - it changes -

Mrs. Hall: The moon. Does the moon really change? /Bell rings for lunch/

Tommy: No - it was just in different positions.

Mrs. Hall: Who wants this book? Who asked for it?

Teachers thus listened to children as they talked about books. They knew that the match between a child's perceptions of the world and an adult's is not always a perfect one; so they "negotiated" meaning with children, as Jerome Bruner has suggested, rather than directing it--learning with children rather than teaching to them.

Recognizing that not all children would respond in the same way to a book, nor would they always be able to articulate their responses in adult terms, the teachers also provided for individual differences. They gave children a variety of outlets for their responses--physical as well as verbal--through a variety of symbol systems: talking, writing, drawing, music, and movement.

Finally, teachers understood that the response process is an ongoing one and gave children time--time to think about the picture books, to look at picture books, to talk about picture books and to respond to picture books--in groups, in pairs, and by themselves. To deepen response, teachers returned to books as new experiences allowed children to bring new understandings to repeated readings. The teachers also recognized that because of developmental constraints children needed time to work toward adult structures of criticism rather than to have these frameworks imposed on their unique construction of the world.

Suzanne Langer contends that art represents a way of knowing rather than naming, and it would certainly seem that in classrooms such as these children do come to know the world more deeply when they come to know it through the eyes of the illustrator. The

picture book does indeed exist as a live circuit between the illustrator as storyteller and the child as reader, and in this process a young mind is energized, enlightened, and enriched.

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